

to the request of the gentleman from Arkansas?

There was no objection.

SENIOR CITIZENS ARE MOST AFFECTED BY HIGH COST OF PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maine (Mr. ALLEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to talk about a problem that affects millions of seniors across this country and, in fact, millions of other people as well. I am talking about those people who do not have prescription drug coverage. No insurance for their prescription drugs.

This problem affects seniors more than others, because although seniors make up 12 percent of the population, they buy 33 percent of all prescription drugs. And studies done in my district in Maine and, indeed, around the country, in approximately 65 to 70 districts, have shown, on average, that seniors pay twice as much for their prescription medications as the drug companies' favored customers.

Well, who are the favored customers? The favored customers are HMOs, big hospitals and, in fact, the Federal Government, buying either for those who are on Medicare or for veterans, who get their drugs through the Veterans Administration. That price discrimination has to stop. That price discrimination is making it impossible for many seniors to take the drugs that their doctors tell them they have to take.

What we have in this country now is a situation where many seniors are having to choose between food on the table, the electric bill, the rent, and taking the prescription drugs that their doctors have given them. So some people are taking one pill out of three. Some people are not taking their prescription medications at all.

I have had a couple of women write to me and say, I do not want my husband to know, but I am not taking my prescription medication because he is sicker than I am and we cannot both afford to take our medications. That should not happen in this country, but it happens because under Medicare there is no coverage for prescription drugs.

In fact, 37 percent of all seniors have no coverage at all for their prescription drugs. Twenty-eight percent have some form of private coverage through a retiree plan, but that number is declining and will decline further. About 8 percent have coverage through medigap, but medigap policies are expensive and often are really not worth the coverage. Seventeen percent have coverage under Medicare managed care. But, frankly, the managed care prescription drug benefits are being cut back, people are being dropped from the rolls, and the benefit, where it still exists, is more expensive than it used to be.

Now, what is happening? I have a bill that would lower the cost of prescription drugs for the elderly. It is H.R. 664, called the Prescription Drug Fairness For Seniors Act. It does not cost the Federal Government any significant amount of money and creates no new bureaucracy, but it would reduce the prices by as much as 40 percent.

There are those out there attacking both my discount plan and the President's plan for a prescription drug benefit under Medicare. There are ads. This is a picture of Flo. Flo is appearing in newspaper ads and she is also appearing in television ads. Who is paying for the ads that Flo brings? Well, something called Citizens for Better Medicare. Well, who are Citizens for Better Medicare? What a great name. It is the pharmaceutical industry primarily. The drug manufacturers. What they are telling us all is that we need to keep the government out of the medicine cabinet, but in fact what they are really trying to do is make sure that their profits continue.

This is the most profitable industry in the country, and it spends its money, millions of dollars, \$30 million, to try to persuade people that what they really want is a program that will continue the high prices that people pay for Medicare.

Now, Flo, of course, is a fake. She is an actress. She is not a real person. There are lots of real people in my district who are having trouble paying for their prescription drugs, but Flo is one of the 28 percent, arguably, who actually have prescription drug coverage.

□ 2000

But she feels no compunction, her pharmaceutical manufacturer sponsors feel no compunction in trying to make sure that the 37 percent with no coverage at all do not get any further breaks. It is outrageous.

There is price discrimination going on in this industry against seniors right now. It needs to stop. Flo says, "We don't want big government in our medicine cabinet." But without the Food and Drug Administration, we could not be sure that the drugs in the medicine cabinet are safe and effective. Without the government, people on Medicaid would have no drugs in the medicine cabinet at all. So the poorer people in this country are getting their prescription drugs paid for but people who are just above the poverty line are not. They are the people who often have several hundred dollars a month in prescription drug costs and they cannot do it.

We need to pass H.R. 664, the Prescription Drug Fairness for Seniors Act. We need to resist what Flo is trying to say. We need to stop big money in politics.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2606, FOREIGN OPERATIONS, EXPORT FINANCING, AND RELATED PROGRAMS APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2000

Mr. CALLAHAN (during the special order of Mr. OWENS) submitted the following conference report and statement on the bill (H.R. 2606) making appropriations for foreign operations, export financing, and related programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2000, and for other purposes:

CONFERENCE REPORT (H. REPT. 106-339)

The committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 2606) "making appropriations for foreign operations, export financing, and related programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2000, and for other purposes", having met, after full and free conference, have agreed to recommend and do recommend to their respective Houses as follows:

That the House recede from its disagreement to the amendment of the Senate, and agree to the same with an amendment, as follows:

In lieu of the matter stricken and inserted by said amendment, insert:

That the following sums are appropriated, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2000, and for other purposes, namely:

TITLE I—EXPORT AND INVESTMENT ASSISTANCE

EXPORT-IMPORT BANK OF THE UNITED STATES

The Export-Import Bank of the United States is authorized to make such expenditures within the limits of funds and borrowing authority available to such corporation, and in accordance with law, and to make such contracts and commitments without regard to fiscal year limitations, as provided by section 104 of the Government Corporation Control Act, as may be necessary in carrying out the program for the current fiscal year for such corporation: Provided, That none of the funds available during the current fiscal year may be used to make expenditures, contracts, or commitments for the export of nuclear equipment, fuel, or technology to any country other than a nuclear-weapon state as defined in Article IX of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons eligible to receive economic or military assistance under this Act that has detonated a nuclear explosive after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SUBSIDY APPROPRIATION

For the cost of direct loans, loan guarantees, insurance, and tied-aid grants as authorized by section 10 of the Export-Import Bank Act of 1945, as amended, \$759,000,000 to remain available until September 30, 2003: Provided, That such costs, including the cost of modifying such loans, shall be as defined in section 502 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974: Provided further, That such sums shall remain available until September 30, 2018 for the disbursement of direct loans, loan guarantees, insurance and tied-aid grants obligated in fiscal years 2000, 2001, 2002, and 2003: Provided further, That none of the funds appropriated by this Act or any prior Act appropriating funds for foreign operations, export financing, or related programs for tied-aid credits or grants may be used for any other purpose except through the regular notification procedures of the Committees on Appropriations: Provided further, That funds appropriated by this paragraph are made available notwithstanding section 2(b)(2) of the Export Import Bank Act of 1945, in connection with the purchase or lease of any product by any East European country, any Baltic State or